

FIRST LADY WALKER'S INITIATIVE

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

FACTS & FIGURES

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In 2011, First Lady Tonette Walker created Fostering Futures, an initiative to raise awareness about childhood trauma and ensure that children recover from these experiences by utilizing Trauma-Informed Care in their daily interactions, in public service systems and organizations, and in government. Her efforts are working, and people across the nation and world are beginning to take notice.

TRAUMA & TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE (TIC)

Trauma-Informed Care, or TIC, principles work to increase people's understanding of historical trauma and childhood adversity and develop relevant trauma-informed practices that meet the needs of individuals and communities.

It is an approach that is receiving much national attention following Oprah Winfrey's *60 Minutes* special on childhood trauma, but it is nothing new in Wisconsin. In the episode, Oprah defines the essence of TIC, saying "It comes down to the question of not, 'What's wrong with you? What's wrong with that kid?' but, 'What happened to you,' which is a very different question."

This shift in perspective leads to answers that get at that root cause of kids' issues versus a quick reaction that often stops at punishment.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

These traumas can be categorized as Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, and may include: physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; emotional neglect; physical neglect; mental illness of a household member; alcoholism of a household member; illegal drug use of a household member; divorce or separation of a parent; domestic violence towards a parent; and incarceration of a household member.

[Research](#) shows when a person has one ACE, they are more likely to have two or more other ACEs. The most recent [national data](#) indicates that almost 25% of children in the United States have experienced at least one ACE and almost 22% have two or more. In Wisconsin, these rates are lower than the national average, at 21.2% and 20.3%, respectively.

When trauma is experienced as a child, the unmitigated toxic stress created by these experiences can [change brain chemistry, shape educational outcomes, and influence a person's future health and well-being](#).

[Research](#) also shows a strong link between the number of ACEs and adult health. As the number of reported ACEs increase, the greater a person's risk becomes for cancer, diabetes, depression, alcoholism, drug use, smoking, suicide, homelessness, and more.

PROMOTION & INCORPORATION OF TIC AT THE STATE & FEDERAL LEVEL

Wisconsin is leading nationally in its recognition and incorporation of Trauma-Informed Care.

Under the direction of First Lady Walker and the Department of Health Services' Office of Children's Mental Health, six Wisconsin agencies, including the Departments of Health Services, Veterans Affairs, Workforce Development, Children and Families, and Corrections, as well as the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation are implementing Trauma-Informed Care principles within their interactions with each other as well as in the services they provide.

In February 2018, the United States House of Representatives passed House Resolution 443 with overwhelming, bipartisan support. Representative Mike Gallagher (R-WI) and First Lady Walker worked closely to draft the resolution, which works to raise awareness about the nature and impact of trauma, the importance of prevention, the impact ACEs can have on brain development, and the numerous benefits of TIC.

She also continues to work with Senators Ron Johnson (R-WI) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) to pass Senate Resolution 346, which they collaborated on to recognize the importance, effectiveness, and need for Trauma-Informed Care among existing federal programs and agencies.

In March, Governor Walker proclaimed May as Trauma-Informed Care Awareness Month and May 22 as Trauma-Informed Care Day throughout Wisconsin to increase awareness.

Today, the First Lady continues to work with Wisconsin communities, her fellow first spouses, and a governmental delegation from Oslo, Norway to promote and implement TIC throughout the nation and world.